

Statement of Charles Pardee

Chief Operating Officer

Exelon Generation Company

Briefing on Nuclear Safety in Illinois

March 25, 2011

Senator Durbin, Senator Kirk, thank you for the opportunity to appear today on behalf of Exelon to discuss the safety of nuclear power plants in Illinois. Exelon has the largest fleet of nuclear power plants in the United States. We own and operate 17 reactors at 10 sites in three states, including each of the 11 operating reactors in Illinois. We also own two shut down reactors in Zion, Illinois, which are currently being decommissioned.

We have been following events in Japan closely since the historic earthquake and tsunami struck on March 11. Many of us at Exelon have both a professional and personal interest in the events unfolding there. Many of our employees, myself included, have been to Japan a number of times as part of international exchange programs to share operating experience. In fact, I was at the Fukushima Daiichi site just days before the earthquake struck. Our hearts go out to the Japanese people as they respond to the humanitarian crisis they are facing.

It is understandable that many Americans are asking if the events in Japan mean that nuclear power plants in the United States are unsafe. Let me assure you that we have

full confidence that our plants in Illinois and elsewhere are safe. I do not make that statement lightly. Our chairman, John Rowe, challenges us every day with the same question: have we learned anything today that would lead us to consider shutting down any of our plants?

I would like to make three primary points about the safety of Exelon's nuclear plants:

First, these plants were designed and licensed to withstand a variety of natural disasters, including earthquakes, floods, tornados, and, where appropriate, tsunamis. Plants are designed to withstand potential disasters based on the most extreme event known in their geographic location, with significant margin added on to that extreme event.

Second, safety systems and safety procedures at nuclear power plants are not frozen in time once a plant is built. In fact, safety is an issue that is constantly looked at by both the industry and regulators. We have undertaken extensive safety upgrades at our plants in the aftermath of the Three Mile Island incident, the 9/11 attacks, and other events. Particular attention has been paid to putting systems in place to avoid a build up of hydrogen in containment areas -- the likely cause of explosions at the Japanese plants-- and to assuring multiple redundancy for backup power supplies in the event of a loss of offsite power, the precipitating factor in the loss of cooling water issues that have led to the most extensive damage at the Japanese plants.

Third, while it will take months, if not years, to fully understand what happened at the Japanese reactors, industry is not waiting to take action to incorporate lessons-learned from this event. Indeed, I firmly believe that the nuclear industry is unparalleled in its ability incorporate lessons-learned to ensure excellence in operations. There are two organizations -- the U.S.-based Institute of Nuclear Operations (INPO) and its international equivalent, the World Association of Nuclear Operators (WANO) -- that are devoted to ensuring excellence by sharing best practices, assessing and incorporating lessons-learned from events like this, and rigorously assessing plant performance to ensure sound operations.

Within days of the earthquake and tsunami, the industry issued directives to each of our plants to undertake a variety of actions to assure that seismic and safety-related equipment was in good material condition and to review our emergency response plans, including each plant's capability to manage a total loss of off-site power. These assessments are ongoing, and I am confident that both the industry and the Nuclear Regulatory Commission will have additional action items in the coming weeks and months to ensure our plants continue to operate safely.

Aside from the safety of nuclear reactors, I know that there are also concerns about the safety of spent fuel pools in light of the events in Japan. At Exelon's nuclear sites in Illinois, we have 8 spent fuel pools at 7 sites. These pools are located within each plant's secondary containment building. The pools at Dresden, LaSalle and Quad Cities are elevated, while the pools at Braidwood, Byron, Clinton and Zion are at or below grade

level. In addition to spent fuel pools, we utilize dry cask storage at 4 of our Illinois sites, with a fifth site beginning dry cask storage this summer. As I noted, our Zion units are shut down and are currently undergoing decommissioning. As part of this work, we expect all of the fuel at Zion to be removed from the spent fuel pool to dry casks within 3 or 4 years.

As with our reactors, we have taken a number of steps in the aftermath of Three Mile Island and 9/11 to bolster the security of spent fuel pools and to enhance our ability to respond to unanticipated events. Backup power systems, abundant on-site water supplies, and additional high-capacity pumps provide us with a defense-in-depth system to assure the safety of these pools.

Let me conclude by recognizing the dedicated employees of Exelon Nuclear. Safety is, and continues to be, our primary focus at Exelon, and we have thousands of employees working tirelessly every hour of every day to ensure that our plants operate safely and efficiently. We take immense pride in our operational record, and we never forget that our job is to operate our plants safely so we can keep the lights on for more than 13 million people across the country.

Thank you again for the opportunity to appear here today. I know that you have both toured Exelon plants in recent years, and we would certainly welcome you any time to come see the specific safety systems I have discussed.

###